

2025

ATTACHMENT C

Budget Community Conversation Series Notes



Budget Community Conversation #1: Silver Threads Service

Tuesday, July 30, 2024 from noon-2 p.m.

Silver Threads Service, 1911 Quadra Street

11 participants

Co-Host: Tracy Ryan, Executive Director, Silver Threads Service

ACTIVITY 1 – Share Your Ideas

The following notes depict the agreed-upon themes, the content of each sticky note and the associated comments captured during the community conversation, when applicable.

Accessibility

- Safe walking, good accessible walking sidewalks and paths with good walk lights
- Mobility scooter access to bike lanes and side streets?

Comments:

- Can we ride our mobility scooters in the bike lane?

Community

- Have Silver Threads in a City-owned building or have property tax forgiven
- Support Silver Threads either with money for property tax and operating or find a City-owned centre
- I want to understand why the City does things the way they do/did
- Availability of community gardens, specifically behind St. Ann's to Beacon Hill
- Support for existing partner organizations vs. New
- Community gardens + incentives to use private lots?

Comments:

- Why are existing partners like Silver Threads not getting more money but new organizations like Solid Outreach get funding?

Community Safety & Well-Being

- Need to be more aware of your surroundings downtown
- Policing/safety addressing street issues D.T. (i.e. random attacks)
- Not enough police presence strolling and on bikes (don't see them)
- Continued safety walking downtown and on Pandora street
- Safety in the streets, Aggressive panhandling, Douglas between Yates & Fort smells & garbage, people in doorways
- Safety downtown
- Theft from residences (cars being broken into)
- Garbage strewn from the dumpster, looking for bottles and food, access from Vic High

Comments:

- Safety in the streets
- I don't bother going downtown, too many random attacks

- I have not felt personally threatened downtown
- Greater awareness needed to safely go downtown now
- Theft is a huge problem for store owners
- Need for continued safety walking downtown and Pandora Avenue
- Aggressive panhandling at Douglas and Fort

Downtown

- A lot of vacancies
- Still love Government Street, Ship Point, Fisherman's Wharf
- Theft from shops
- Stores that lock their doors
- Nothing going on downtown after 5pm
- Centennial square expense, why this?
- City Council doesn't care or give a xxxx!!! Not listening, spend money on unhoused

Comments:

- If no one wants to come to downtown, how will we get money to make these changes
- We need more markets, concerts, events downtown to get people downtown
- Increased vacancies in businesses
- Some people feel uncomfortable walking past unhoused people

Economy

- Economic health

Comments:

- City needs money and people's involvement
- Increased real estate protections for mom-and-pop landlords (as opposed to large corporations owning buildings)

Facilities / Crystal Pool

- Sell Hermann's Jazz Club building and use funds for something under your purview
- Make Hermann's even more viable, support others instead of buying building
- Crystal Pool options, how we got here, very specific, what you want
- Crystal Pool was the \$200 million in the top, middle or low to rebuild?

Comments:

- Sell Herman's Jazz Club and use the funds support the seniors' centres
- City should support Hermann's Jazz Club (i.e., reduce property taxes) rather than buying the building; what is the return on our money?
- Crystal Pool: There's confusion about why it got turned down in 2017 and now it's way more expensive, people want to understand how we got here
- People don't want yes or no on the Crystal Pool referendum, they want options (i.e., just a pool vs a bigger facility, etc.)

- Feels like the Council doesn't give a xxx about what the community wants, I've already decided the plan, don't both me with facts

Housing

- Grant St. affordable housing in Fernwood
- Increased landlord protections for small (mom/pop) investors. No incentives to be a landlord, 6-9 months to evict
- Getting the homeless off the streets and into housing
- Affordable mixed housing for seniors, families, low income
- Foul Bay Road development, below-market is too costly, but Council didn't wait until it was complete to allow for fewer below-market units, less parking, where do kids play?
- To make my life better, move unhoused out of tents and into housing*
- Solve homeless people problem*
- What, if anything, might Council do to encourage BC Housing to better facilitate affordable housing (i.e., independent living facilities)?

Comments:

- More subsidized/rent-to-income housing
- The need for lower rent, more housing projects aligned with income
- 1980s subsidized housing was 3.5% now it's half that and look at how much we have grown
- End of Grant St. affordable housing buildings, more than 300 units, 5 buildings

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure currently not adequate to support additional housing (i.e., improve sewer and water pipes)

Comments:

- Can our infrastructure support all this development?
- Difficulty determining what the City is responsible for vs the province vs federal government

Parks and Greenspaces

- Community Safety and well-being: pedestrian paths starting with the shared paths along the busy sections of places like the Galloping Goose or Lochside
- Good connections between pathways
- Gathering spaces in the odd spots (e.g. Fisgard/Blanshard), busy highway, weird spot
- Romeo's park site – more info/rationale/timing, hardship for Silver Threads to be in the current location. Why not move Silver Threads into one of the buildings?
- Concern about Centennial Square's removal of the fountain for a splash park

Comments:

- Connector trails really neat system
- Community gardens, provide incentives to use private property, utilizing empty lots, even temporary plots
- Incentivize developers to make space available for temporary garden spaces

- We need more information on the timeline and rationale for Romeo's park site. It doesn't seem logical.
- Silver Threads is the only senior's centre not in a city building, paying rent and property taxes. Why are you tearing down a building (Romeos) that Silver Threads could be in? The building would need to be renovated to accommodate Silver Threads.
- It's a lot of money to build the park at Romeo's, seems like an odd location

Social Services & the Unhoused

- Better hours and wages for outreach support workers
- Strengthen working relationship with BC Housing
- Supported housing, especially for those who have difficulties being housing (staying)
- Supports for the homeless (physical health, mental health, substance abuse, jobs)
- Dowler Place – questions regarding the process and the impact on the neighbourhood
- Housing – help for people not in residential areas e.g. Dowler Place
- Housing help for the homeless that are capable of having their own housing
- More tiny homes in different locations
- City of Fredericton has successfully built a community of tiny homes
- Unhoused to feel ownership for their community, it's beneficial for them to have people downtown spending money
- Services and support for tent camps (i.e. downtown that support people living in tents and businesses working there)
- Misters attract the unhoused

Comments:

- Hard and drastic change is necessary to address the unhoused issue
- Somehow homeless people need support to realize that it's beneficial for them if the city is strong financially
- We need to teach the unhoused people "how to fish" -- to care about if Victoria is in a good position
- Unhoused need to feel ownership of their community
- The need to find shelter for people, not just take down/remove tents
- The need for a response from within the unhoused community, rather than an external force
- Outreach organizations need better training and pay for those who are hired to provide the support to help people stay in those positions
- What do we do with those who refuse housing, those who are unsafe and need support
- Services and support for tent camps to support people who live and work in the neighbourhood
- The need for a humane response to those who are unhoused (experience with an organization that had a person who was focused on whether the organization was being a good neighbour
- Provide help for people that is not in a residential area
- People don't understand what is going to happen at Dowler Place, is it a shelter? is it a consumption site?

- There is a need for more community meetings to increase awareness of the plans for Dowler Place facility
- More tiny home communities throughout the City
- City of Fredericton has done really well with establishing tiny homes and communities to get people off the street
- Support for homeless regarding health and wellness

Transportation

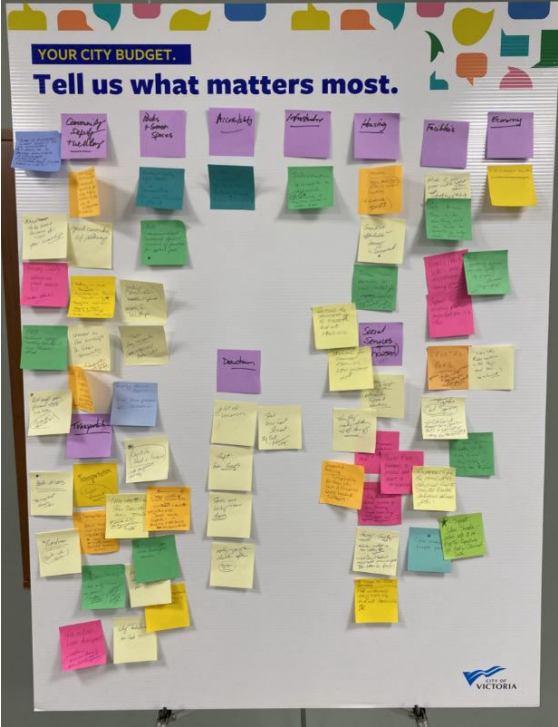
- Free bus passes for seniors
- Buses that run more regularly and more buses during busy times
- Better drivers, too many bad drivers
- Pedestrians, signals stay longer
- Light transit
- Cyclists need a license, ride anywhere, don't signal
- No right turns on busy streets
- Bus drivers well trained – polite but jerky driving, sudden brakes
- Free bus passes for seniors
- Bike lanes and bus lanes on separate streets
- Why are there bike lanes on Cook?
- Hold on bike lane development – when are we done? Does it all have to happen at once?
- Bus-only lanes – Shelbourne St., bike lanes only on Pandora and Fort

Comments:

- Light rapid transit to discourage people from driving but there will always be people driving, from Victoria up the island to Nanaimo
- Bikes need to be licensed, they are unsafe riding their bikes on the sidewalks, in bike lanes, anywhere they want

Post Community Conversation Input:

I was at the community discussion about the priorities for the 2025 budget on Tuesday at Silver Threads and I just wanted to add a couple of points to the safety and wellbeing section that we are also concerned about. And I notice, I'm wondering if because the tents are being moved from Pandora, which is great, they at least during the daytime. But I see people, mostly men, in all sorts of little corners of the downtown. This morning, for example, I nearly stepped on the head of someone as I turned the corner of a man just flat on his back on the sidewalk. And I was out for about an hour, an hour and a half. And I saw a number of men, young men in various strange locations. So, I wonder if that's something that bylaw or the police patrols can look at. And I know, anyway, just wanted to leave that with you. Thank you.



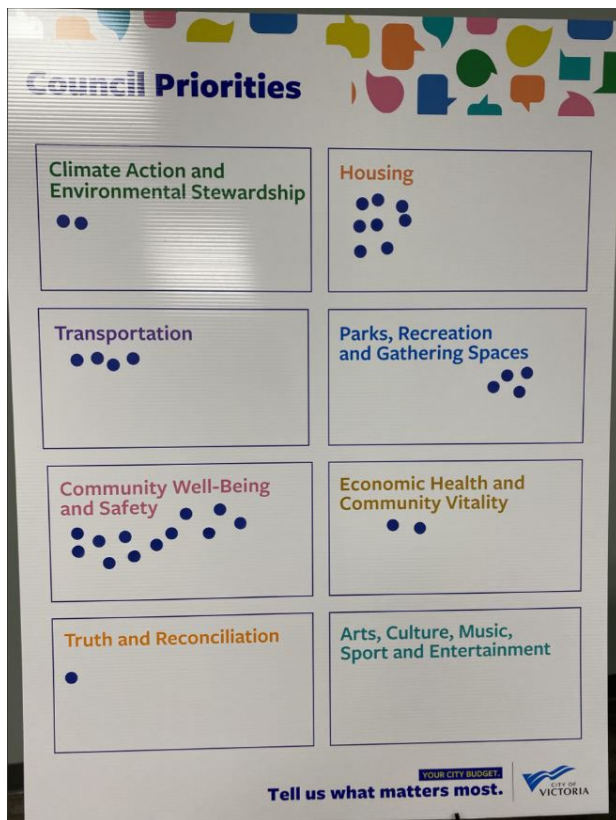
ACTIVITY 2 – Rank Council’s 8 Priorities

Activity Results:

1. Community Well-Being and Safety (12 dots)
2. Housing (8 dots)
3. Parks, Recreation, and Gathering Spaces (4 dots)
Transportation (4 dots)

Followed by:

- Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (2 dots)
- Economic Health and Community Vitality (2 dots)
- Truth and Reconciliation (1 dot)
- Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment (0 dots)



Budget Community Conversation #2: Victoria Native Friendship Centre

Wednesday, July 31, 2024, 10 a.m.-noon

Victoria Native Friendship Centre, 231 Regina Avenue

9 participants

Co-hosted by Katherin Cooper, Program Administrator, Victoria Native Friendship Centre

ACTIVITY 1 – Share Your Ideas

The following notes depict the agreed-upon themes, the content of each sticky note and the associated comments captured during the community conversation, when applicable.

Accessibility

- Financially supporting & fostering disability inclusion efforts where local non-profits and community-based groups are failing (i.e., still too much segregation and discrimination)

Comments:

- Financially supporting disability inclusion efforts where community-based groups are failing

Arts & Culture

- Public poetry, a chance to write together
- Promote artistic studio space for Indigenous artists to break into art for public display – sharing culture and building a way out of poverty and addiction
- Arts and crafts, arts curriculum
- Support the creation of cross-cultural events, bringing together Indigenous organizations and government officials and representatives to promote better understanding and relations
- More art projects around the City which artists having more of a say when it comes to community projects, easier access to funding

Comments:

- City needs to be less prescriptive in the community art they are looking for rather than letting the artist create what they want

Climate

- Climate actions – do more traditional safe & controlled burns to mitigate the forest fires that burn for oxygen

Comments:

- Put solar panels and windows into older and newer buildings
- The earth needs oxygen; controlled burns would reduce forest fires

Community

- Hostilities between wealth disparity groups
- Financial supports for organizations such as iHeart
- Change the narrative around the street community and unsheltered folks. Needs more compassion.

Comments:

- We need people with lived experience guiding the approaches rather than just educated staff basing it all on books
- People stay within their socio-economic bubbles
- The humanity has been lost within community
- iHeart closed due to lack of funding because rent was so expensive
- Community wellness for all people

Economy

- Concern over the impact of the housing crisis on tourism jobs and tourists
- Incentivising community participation in local government through stipends for committee members as part of employment support and inclusion efforts

Comments:

- We need to address the issue of the unhoused because of the impact on the bottom line of tourism dollars and tourism jobs
- The gap between the upper class and those below the poverty line is growing

Health (Physical & Mental)

- Enforce no-smoking rules in no-smoking buildings
- Mental health-specific centers - some specifically for the homeless and displaced
- Passive suicidality also needs support
- Community wellness for all people

Comments:

- Mental health centre where people can get services
- Mental health prevents people from caring for themselves
- We need mental health support without criminalization – currently must be arrested to get help to get to hospital, should be able to access support without getting arrested
- Currently the only way to get support is to be actively suicidal (i.e., having a plan) there is no acknowledgment of passive suicidality (i.e., no plan)
- Mental health centres, specifically for the unhoused community

Housing

- Safe and affordable housing and building up low-income, support housing, students
- Housing for all family types
- More affordable senior housing
- Luxury mansions vs people in distress
- Proper placement of rental housing, not next to the rich
- More subsidized or rent-to-income housing
- High rents vs how affordable
- Local caps and checks and balances for rent increases in the face of low-income

- Landlords are also prioritizing students or flat-out denying rental to non-students
- Need more rental stock & no renovictions

Comments

- The City is getting a failing grade on housing
- Not everyone needs the same type of housing
- Housing has many different components including social services and community safety and wellbeing
- The government needs to build rentals
- Mixed housing increases people's negative feelings of inferiority
- More housing for families and those parents leaving abusive relationships
- Can't be one size fits all approach
- Safe and supportive housing
- Community housing and wellness centres
- Enforce "no smoking" rules in non-smoking buildings
- Housing for all people in need

Infrastructure

- VNFC & non-profits aren't zoned properly
- Rezoning is needed to create the necessary housing
- Put solar panels & new windows on new and older buildings

Comments:

- Non-profits are trying to build tiny home communities, but zoning is a problem
- The City can help by changing zoning to allow for creative housing solutions (i.e., Tiny Town)

Law Enforcement (Bylaw and Police)

- Bylaw officers enforcing no loitering in downtown and tourist areas. Tourists bring money to support our city.
- Use some tourism money to have more bylaw officers to make sure everyone enjoys a cheerful, clean and safe downtown area and that not only tourists enjoy it but residents too!
- Less sweeps of Pandora Street
- Opportunities for Bylaw to connect
- Police that have proper training and have community cops
- Move away from tourist season unhoused sweeps
- No more sweeps, not helpful
- Restructuring bylaws approach to "cleaning up the streets", too much fearmongering
- Should we ticket people who can't pay?

Comments:

- More signage for Centennial Square being a park, and therefore no smoking is allowed, especially since tickets are now being given out
- Stop the sweeps – the circle of the sweeps, bylaw takes stuff and then people need to go back to the organizations to get a new tent, then the new tent gets taken and the cycle continues
- We need to restructure Bylaw's approach to cleaning up the streets
- Sweep on Pandora last week – they took everything without giving people the opportunity to take their things and move along – including purses, backpacks, medication, identification cards
- Does Bylaw have any trauma-informed training? Why not?
- Police need trauma-informed training
- More beat cops to build community
- We need to hear about the training they are receiving
- Police need proper training
- Less sweeps of Pandora
- Use some tourism money to have more bylaw officers to make sure downtown is clean and safe for everyone
- Bylaw officers enforcing “no loitering” because tourists come to our city
- People are fearful of calling the police/bylaw because we don't know that they will receive supportive care or be safe with police/bylaw

Parks & Greenspace

- Take half the City's flower budget and grow food to give away
- Non-invasive species
- We need the food, not the veggie starts
- Green spaces need more for all people
- Parks are the only form of recreation and community gathering that are free; do not allow camping
- Parks and recreation affordable for all people
- Keep parks for recreation and community gathering, not campsites
- Grow traditional medicines in City parks and all people harvest from them

Comments:

- Keep parks for community to gather, not campsites
- We are losing habitats and need space to grow medicine not tulips
- Introduce non-invasive species
- Get Growing – could be better, the large majority of people can't access space to garden but need the food

Reconciliation

- Protected support for Urban Indigenous and those away from the community (off-reserve)
- Look beyond the local nations
- Reconciliation means including all nations including ALL NATIONS not just local-born natives
- Who are you? Assumptions that Indigenous people have all the knowledge

Comments:

- You can't paint all Indigenous people the same, the urban Indigenous people have different needs and should still get a voice
- There are several reasons why people leave the reserves and can't go back to their traditional territories, especially reserves
- I feel like an unwelcome Indian on territories that aren't my own because the only Indigenous people that the City recognizes and listens to are from Songhees and Esquimalt
- Reconciliation means all Nations, not just those born on these territories
- Reconciliation includes urban Indigenous – all Metis people are part of this category because they lack a traditional territory as home
- Organizations call VNFC if they have one Indigenous resident rather than supporting the person directly; more education is needed for organizations about how to work with Indigenous people
- Truth and Reconciliation should be a lens and component of each of the strategic priorities, not siloed
- Protective services for urban Indigenous people who live off their territories
- We need funding to have Indigenous people in all schools teaching about the land and their culture

Recreation

- A huge need is for inclusive recreational sports/programs for children with disabilities

Comments:

- Parks and recreation should be affordable for all people
- The LIFE pass has too many barriers with such a big process every year

Safety

- Crime breeds crime
- Ways of reporting crime-adjacent activity and behaviour (scary & harmful) when it does not fall into police power

Comments:

- There are several spots downtown where a blind woman has been propositioned for sex
- There is a need for information for tourists about fire bans

Social Services

- Mental health support without criminalization; we need the ability to call for someone to come help without it involving an arrest
- Healthcare and support for unhoused – social workers, drug checking sites (to make sure the drugs are clean), shelters
- We need to care for the caregivers

Comments:

- All organizations compete for the same grant funding, which doesn't reinforce a collaborative approach, someone wins, and someone loses, if they lose they often have to close

Transportation

- City bus stops and BC Transit are too disconnected, which impacts vulnerable riders (e.g., HandiDart is not allowed to stop at Quadra & Pandora)
- Transit drivers need to be more aware of driving with seniors and people with disabilities
- No cars on all of Government
- Another bike valet at the opposite end of downtown
- Earlier transit
- Increase incentives for people to NOT drive downtown!
- Transportation for elders to be free
- Advocacy to BC Transit to uphold its standards and listen to feedback

Comments:

- Bus stops get closed and people are not notified
- Bylaws at bus stops not being enforced (i.e., Johnson and Blanshard is a pick-up zone, fear of specific bus stops)
- Quadra and Pandora – HandiDart aren't allowed to stop there impacting residents who need to access services
- More notification when a bus stop moves
- Elder transportation should be free
- Transit drivers need to be more aware of when older adults and people with disabilities get on the bus – they need more time once they get on to get settled before the bus drives off
- City bus stop infrastructure and BC Transit are disconnected and it impacts marginalized riders
- Earlier transit

Unhoused People & Social Supports

- Housing crisis – structured housing treatment & health not one set of housing fits all
- We have a beautiful city, put more money into homeless people
- Group homes that are safe and humane
- People feel safer outdoors than in a shelter; we need a safe space outdoors, and we need humanity

- Some people can't live in a box
- Access hub, new supportive camp
- Safe shelters with trained/qualified staff
- Housing for all people in need
- Shelters are not homes
- Community housing with wellness centres
- Shelters that accommodate sober unhoused people without dependants
- Active outreach to unhoused, one-on-one investigative approach & help according to individual needs
- A public/free campsite for homeless folks that is staffed and has food, etc.
- We need an area for displaced people away from Downtown where they have necessities of life, services right there so they have mental health, social services, policing, etc. No city resident or visitor should have to walk through a homeless encampment.
- Tiny homes - create a community and provide social, mental and health services
- Tiny homes – let them stay and be stable
- Supports beyond police for unhoused
- Rotating social workers is not effective at supporting people to address their substance abuse disorder or mental health struggles
- Support workers for unhoused people - Not enough money, emotionally difficult work, heavy load, no support
- Support workers need high wages, self-care, counselling, no support for dealing with deaths
- People are siloed – not fostering humanity to take blinders off
- Mayor and Council to live in a shelter for 3 days
- Need one support person for every unhoused person – educated, person-centred approach

Comments:

- There is a need for forced hospitalization for those who live with mental illness and addiction
- People fall through the cracks when they need support and it's not provided
- Shelters are not homes. We do not need more shelters, we need more homes
- Not everyone on the streets can live independently and that needs to be acknowledged
- People need care and support to live independently
- We need group homes that are safe and humane
- There is a need for distinct stages of support (hospital, then transitional home then out to community)
- There are a lot of people who feel safer under the sky as opposed to under a roof
- There needs to be a safe space that is outdoors and is safe
- Do not leave out humanity when working with unhoused people
- The response to the unhoused needs to be circular and supportive
- Safe outdoor spaces require water, toilets, etc.
- Consistency and routine are needed to help unhoused people
- We need to provide the services – food, mental health support, water, policing, showers
- Need a shift in policing to protect unhoused people from those preying on them
- Staff burn out doing this work – not enough money, community dying every day, no support

- Frontline workers are harmed emotionally by the working conditions without support
- Frontline staff need support, we need to care for our caregivers
- Staff burn out as quickly as they can be hired
- Repeated cycle of burnout until people leave this type of work
- Unhoused people often have a tough time trusting because of how they have been treated by the system
- Organizations and people need to know that the support they are relying on will continue
- We need to help people feel a sense of belonging in our communities without making them feel inferior or less than
- Cannot have support pulled away as soon as someone gets housed
- Unhoused people need one support worker throughout the various stages of getting and keeping housing
- Frontline staff need to be trained on how to work with Indigenous people
- We need to treat people with love and respect, not judgement
- Caring and sharing is an important piece of getting people housed
- We need to build real relationships with unhoused people to help us get people housed
- Everyone needs to care about the unhoused, not just frontline staff
- More places that support people with access to computers and phones because the number of people who need these services is huge
- IDEA: What about the old Canadian Tire on Douglas Street? Can it be used for housing unhoused people or as a storage location for the unhoused community's belongings?
- We should be supporting our unhoused people before immigrants
- We need to change the narrative around the street community and unhoused folks
- We need pet-friendly shelters that support sober, unhoused people without dependants
- Health care and support for unhoused people
- More money towards drug checking
- Shelters are unsafe because the skilled and experienced staff burnout
- Need a site away from downtown with all their services because no one should have to walk through an area with tents
- More money invested in homeless people
- Support beyond police for unhoused people
- Even if they did not spend a whole week in a shelter, the Mayor and Council need to experience a night as an unhoused person to better understand the experience of the unhoused as they interact with the various systems



ACTIVITY 2 – Rank Council’s 8 Priorities

Activity Results:

1. Housing (8 dots)
2. Community Well-Being and Safety (6 dots)
3. Truth and Reconciliation (6 dots)

Followed by:

- Parks, Recreation, and Gathering Spaces (2 dots)
- Transportation (2 dots)
- Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment (1 dot)
- Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (1 dot)
- Economic Health and Community Vitality (1 dot)

Council Priorities

Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship



Housing



Transportation



Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces



Community Well-Being and Safety



Economic Health and Community Vitality



Truth and Reconciliation



Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment



YOUR CITY BUDGET
Tell us what matters most.



Budget Community Conversation #3: Our Place Society

Friday, August 2, 2024 | 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Our Place Society, 919 Pandora Avenue

11 participants

Co-host: Salome Waters, Seniors Support and Inclusion Worker, Our Place Society

ACTIVITY 1 – Share Your Ideas

The following notes depict the agreed upon themes, the content of each sticky-note and the associated comments captured during the community conversation, when applicable.

Arts & Culture

- Low-income entertainment – ie the Museum is now out of reach

Comments:

- Pandora Arts Collective had their funding cut, we need that funding restored, it's a very important program

Business/Economy

- Business licenses for prostitution

Climate & Environment

- A place to put free items on the street
- Free service to pick up furniture and large items
- Change the bylaw for putting free items on the curb because it would go to the garbage
- Keep sequoia tree

Comments:

- Ways to create large scale weather protection (and shade)
- Can we allow people to leave good quality items on the curb to prevent them going to the landfill?
- We need a hub for free stuff to keep it out of the dump

Education

- Proper citizen education re: truth in media stories
- Arrests are more visible among the homeless making people fearful
- Educate people about unhoused – ie call 911 when someone is in distress

Healthcare

- Urgent care clinics for seniors only
- All prescriptions should be covered – and glasses, dentures etc. on PWD
- Support systems for single women between 55-65 years

- Disability – what happens when people turn 65 and lose their provincial disability?
- Only \$50 per visit for physio covered
- Refused care for cancer treatment at Cool Aid doctor's office
- Medical service for seniors – dentist, chiro, acupressure, etc.
- Attitudes to those who do drugs – healthcare workers should be educated
- Addiction “chasing the dragon”
- Medical system – kicked out after treatment if unhoused
- Low-income housing grandfathered – weed makes them sick should be non-smoking
- Cooling alerts to avoid heat domes – misters to be helpful
- Health and Medical access for Seniors
- Learn about and address the corruption in provincial healthcare system
- Coastal Health sending people here on buses no shelter for people
- Why doesn't system recognize herbal remedies instead of taking 20 pills a day
- Open heart surgery or cancer patients go to a shelter
- Victoria Brain Injury Society – Hitler attitude to those who do drugs (they) should be eradicated

Comments:

- Why aren't we using psychiatry students at UVic medical school to provide care to unhoused and those living with substance use disorder?
- Person with disabilities, receiving benefits get free frame and lenses but not bifocals, dentures
- I was refused medical care at Cool Aid
- People get taken to the bus stop after being discharged from the hospital and/or emergency if they don't have anywhere to go
- Extreme weather protocol is too slow
- Loneliness kills
- We need more clinics, so I don't have to go to the hospital for clinic things
- We need public toilets and showers down on Pandora
- We need a cooling alert when it's too hot
- Misters need to be turned on earlier in the year
- We need awnings to provide shade and weather protection
- Addiction and maintaining is the main cause of problems on Pandora – “chasing the dragon”

Housing

- Small micro housing (shoebox) similar to after WWII
- Safe place to sleep – tents are targets, shelters aren't safe
- Tiny houses – 3D printing
- Tiny houses take up a lot of room
- Low-income, safe housing for all
- Supportive housing
- Use Canadian Tire on Douglas into housing
- Safe housing, safe shelter

- More guidelines for companies wanting to redevelop and tear down existing properties and those who are renovating

Comments:

- Could we use 3D printers to make tiny homes? Could UVic students work on this?
- After living with a roommate for six months the government considers us to be in a relationship (i.e., common law)
- Been told that buildings can't make money on less than two-bedroom units
- I'm on PWD benefits (person with disability) and I can't afford \$375/month for a room at Cool Aid
- We need housing like what was built after the second world war
- What about using the Armory?
- More safe housing

Immigrants and Newcomers

- ICA won't take people if they aren't a Permanent Resident - A centre for newcomers to help them with all the systems and technical language.
- More meetings like this with people who care.

Comments:

- Immigration red tape causes barriers for those who are new to Canada in accessing support
- We need a centre to help newcomers navigate the social services and immigration systems
- ICA only helps permanent residents, who helps people get permanent residence status if it isn't ICA?

Infrastructure

- More awnings for shade and weather and protection on streets
- Public toilets and showers
- More street garbage cans
- Supervised toilets and showers

Law Enforcement (Bylaw & Police)

Comments:

- Bylaw takes everything without giving people a chance to move along including medications, ID, back packs, purses
- Bylaw doesn't allow people the opportunity to gather their stuff and leave before they take their stuff and throw it away
- The sweeps are causing trauma
- Bylaws behaviour sours us to all people in uniform, if the City wants to keep first responders safe, they need to reign in the Bylaw officers because they make it so much worse
- Where do we get our stuff back?
- Why does Bylaw charge money to get my stuff back? That's not right

- Bylaw is traumatizing the people who are unhoused on a daily basis

Older Adults

Comments:

- We need extended health and medical for seniors
- Seniors struggle because they are used to having a full life
- Isolation is deadly
- Turning 65 is scary for people with PWD
- Zero resources for women between 55-65
- We need a shelter for older adults
- Silver Threads is not welcoming to people from Our Place
- We need an urgent care centre for older adults only
- Seniors are at risk of predators in their buildings, pressuring people
- Trying to stay in my home but the costs of landscaping are so high I'm not going to be able to stay much longer

Parks & Greenspace

Comments:

- The sequoia tree in Centennial Square provides shade and is the city's Christmas tree

Safety & Crime

Comments:

- We need low-income, supportive housing that is safe
- Safety needs to be #1 priority
- Gangs are moving in, theft is going up
- More and more guns and weapons showing up
- Gangs are recruiting kids

Shelters

- There are zero resources for those 55-65 years – specifically women
- Male workers at Sandy Merrimen House – no privacy
- Shelter only holds your bed for one night if you need to go to hospital
- Why is the Mayor so angry at Our Place? Instead of helping to house more of our people they are throwing millions at Solid which is going to have people using indoors when they will poison each other
- Extreme weather protocol is too slow
- Can the Armories be used as shelter?
- Need shelters for people who don't do hard drugs and that allow pets
- Storage for belongings
- Only Rock Bay Landing takes pets

- Bylaw officers took a fellow's backpack containing his medication and ID
- Mayor and Council should live on the street and have to sign up for shelters, see the waitlist for a week
- Pet-friendly community centres for people who don't do hard drugs
- Cold weather program needs to activate earlier before people get wet!
- More shelters safe for women and men – separate sections and pet friendly
- Need laundromats – not available at shelters
- Mobile laundry van; hook into services
- Tents get pulled into the courtyard at Our Place; not secure
- More affordable housing that allows pets

Comments

- Times Colonist articles about Pandora aren't true and add to a negative attitude towards the unhoused
- People are fearful of Pandora
- We need shelters that are pet friendly and for those who don't use hard drugs
- Need for awnings or canopies to protect against rain and to create more shade for apartments
- Shelter for sidewalks rain/sun outside buildings
- Safe place to sleep – it's easy to get stabbed or robbed in a tent
- People experience assault and robbery in shelters
- Shelters are not safe
- People need a place to go during the day to shower
- We need pet-friendly, safe shelters
- The City is all talk and no action
- Zero resources for women
- At Sandy Merriman, male staff make me feel unsafe by watching me shower
- Staff throw people out as troublemakers for asking for parking
- If you have to go to the hospital, you lose your bed at shelter and staff will only hold your stuff and bed for 24 hours
- Shelter staff can be very abusive
- Staying at shelter means they take my cheque and treat me like a child
- Why did all this money go to Solid and not Our Place (re: Dowler Place)?
- Why does the Mayor hate Our Place? She sure acts like she does.
- Living in a vehicle is considered housed
- If unhoused, the government doesn't give the person the housing portion of their benefits, if they did people could get motel rooms
- There is hierarchy of humanity and it's not right
- We need the media to be less biased
- Not all homeless are created equal
- Not all women on the street are sex workers
- People assume that every unhoused person is on drugs
- Ignorance is deadly
- High heels are donated and given to unhoused women, even if they can't walk in them
- We need support systems for women between 55-65
- There's too much apathy
- No hope with a whole generation getting wiped out

- We need shelters for people who do not use hard drugs and are pet-friendly
- I feel safer at shelters for women only
- Why can't we have different genders on different floors of the shelter?
- We need safe spaces for people who do not use hard drugs
- It's hard to be living in supportive housing while trying to get and stay clean because drugs and alcohol are all around
- Unhoused people need the unconditional love and support from pets
- Pets are critical to survival for unhoused people
- We need public toilets and showers
- We need lots more garbage cans on Pandora, and more frequent emptying
- We need affordable laundry downtown
- There are no laundry facilities, so people wash their clothes in the bathrooms at shelters
- When you lay addiction on all these issues it magnifies it by a million
- You can't just throw money at the unhoused issue and hope it will go away
- Stereotypes kill unhoused people
- You can't paint all unhoused people with same brush
- We are losing our humanity
- The education level of the people on the streets is enormous and such a waste of their gifts, talents and knowledge
- I'm tired of hearing "street people"
- We need more Tiny Towns for those who are addicted
- Why can't the City use the old Canadian Tire on Douglas for housing and/or secure storage space for unhoused people?
- We need public phones
- Cold and wet weather program not started earlier enough; the temperature cut off is too high
- We need more communication from the City on the cold weather protocol
- People need housing upon release from a detox program, going back to the streets makes it almost impossible to stay clean
- We need the Mayor and Council to spend the night unhoused (done in other jurisdictions including Regina)
- People need a place to store their stuff during the day, not having a secure place to store stuff is a huge barrier to employment
- The goal is to shut down Our Place because we don't need it anymore
- Our Place is my community, even though I am housed

Transportation

- Electric buses
- More buses and a sea bus
- Transit improvements – don't house people where there is no bus service
- Handidart improvements – need to book ahead 3 weeks and it is often late poor service

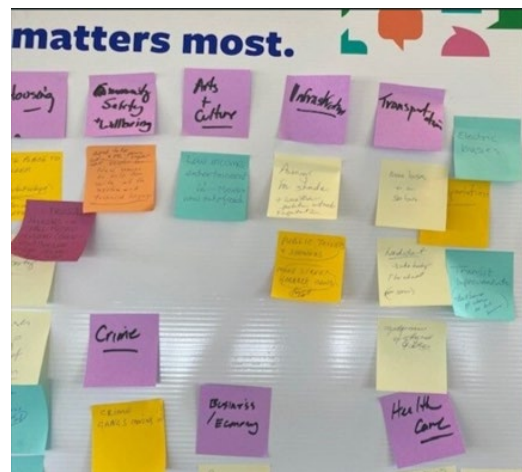
Comments:

- We need a sea bus to the West Shore from downtown
- I love the bus services
- We need more buses

- HandiDart is too inconvenient with the large pick-up and drop-off window, means I can't actually use the service
- We need transit improvements
- Don't house people where there are no buses

Unhoused People

- Not all unhoused are the same
- The false belief that any female on the street is a sex trade worker
- Shoes – giving high heels to unhoused women!
- Silver Threads are nasty and fearful towards seniors from Our Place visitors

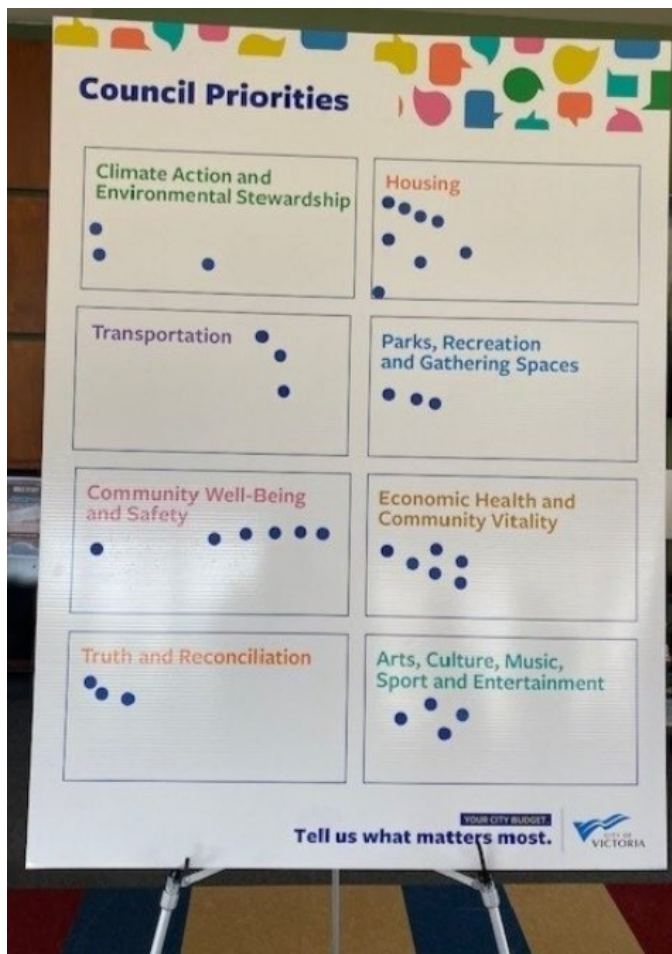


ACTIVITY 2 – Rank Council’s 8 Priorities

1. Housing (8 dots)
2. Community Well-Being and Safety (6 dots)
3. Economic Health and Community Vitality (6 dots)

Followed by:

- Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment (4 dots)
- Parks, Recreation, and Gathering spaces (3 dots)
- Truth and Reconciliation (3 dots)
- Transportation (3 dots)



Budget Community Conversation #4: Victoria Disability Resource Centre

Tuesday, August 6, 2024 from 4-6 p.m.

Victoria Disability Resource Centre

817A Fort Street

12 participants

Co-host: Wendy Cox, Executive Director, Victoria Disability Resource Centre

ACTIVITY 1 – Share Your Ideas

The following notes depict the agreed upon themes, the content of each sticky-note and the associated comments captured during the community conversation, when applicable.

Accessibility

- Affordable, adapted housing for person with disabilities
- Overarching policy to be adaptive and or accessible
- Easier access to mobility aids – wheelchairs that break, challenge to get MSP
- Experience for City Council of one week of “low income” or disability (PWD) budgeting. \$50-100 a week for groceries, etc.

Comments:

- How do we learn about the accessibility email? Everyone in this room should know that. Staff shared to email accessibility@victoria.ca

Arts & Culture

- More accessible venues for Art and Music
- Increased/continued funding for year-round arts and culture initiatives and ensuring they are accessible and safe
- Event and Festival proposals need to have accessibility features (not just physical accommodations) i.e., Royal BC Museum has no braille
- Movie theatres captioning too cumbersome – long cord, heavy and takes up space in cup holders – why not glasses for captioning?

Comments:

- Support for people in independent living to participate
- Accessibility is more than just wheelchairs
- Movie theatres need more closed captioning options
- More accessible venues with equitable access
- Reach out to the disability community to see what they need – we need to feel understood and respected. It feels like people on bikes are more respected than we are.

Communications

- Better exposure of resources available for persons with disabilities
- Reach out to the persons with disabilities community and make sure they feel heard and supported

Comments:

- The city as a hub for information

Community Leadership

- Volunteering – leadership everyone has a role to play. Need role models in community building
- Encouraging the funding of community leadership initiatives

Economy:

- Increase volunteer and employment opportunities for People with Disabilities
- More support/initiatives for small business

Comments:

- A financial option for low-income folks to assist with parking

Facilities and Infrastructure

- Movie theatres should get new closed caption machine for hard of hearing/deaf. The current system - dislike putting unit in cup holder and it is hard to hold
- Public phones
- Hostile architecture needs to go; there should be more places to sit in public places
- Seating with backs, arm rests and NO spikes also leaning spaces (like in McDonalds)
- Install changing places in washrooms with adjustable change tables for adults

Comments:

- Need more covered places to sit, also leaning places – mix those in with seating

Healthcare

- Making healthcare more accessible – shorter wait times, more GP doctors
- Accessing basic healthcare is so challenging – especially with complex medical conditions
- Desperate need of doctors/nurse practitioners
- Need more ASL interpreter funding for community – deaf has to pay from their own pocket for medical interpreter services doctor/dentist/hospital. Government pays fund to interpreter but not community
- Floating bus stop in front of primary care facility
- Education opportunities for the public to learn about substance use disorder regardless of whether they have personal experience with it
- Education campaign to share the stories of people - who are these people?

Comments:

- Make health care more accessible – more doctors to address wait times
- Desperate need for doctors and nurse practitioners
- Need to find more ASL funding for dentists and other health practitioners

Governance

- No councillor comes to AAC meetings

Comments

- No councillor has attended the Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings – the previous Council every councillor attended at least one.

Housing

- Housing Co-op workshops to increase affordable options
- Visual alarms in housing (smoke, carbon monoxide, fire)
- New buildings (apartment/condo/commercial) should have visual emergency lights/fire alarms suitable for deaf/hard of hearing. These residents should not have to pay to install after the build – this should be standard practice.
- New builds should all be adaptable and/or accessible
- Tactile indicators
- Housing for single parent households
- More time to vacate once a property is sold
- More tenant rights
- City should direct people to affordable housing
- Rental cap isn't helping those on PWD or low income.
- More affordable housing/rent increase limits
- Rent control!!
- Affordable housing. Pacifica's affordable housing minimum income is \$60,000. Someone on PWD makes \$17,000.
- Rental caps should be fair to tenants
- Housing subsidy/refund that goes through the City (incentives)
- More lower income housing – need more % of building and areas for low-income housing
- Subsidies for renters on a scale
- Housing is not a privilege

Comments:

- More engagement on how to access and create co-op housing. Most people don't know it is an option
- Also creating more co-op options
- More housing co-ops that are accessible
- I think that everything should be adaptable. BC Housing said that would happen – but it hasn't for all spaces
- New builds should have emergency alert systems for deaf/hard of hearing (also carpeting) and tactile indicators
- More tenant rights – for example our unit was sold and accessed multiple times a week for showings and we had to give up our garden
- Rent control! Rent increases are not keeping up with salaries – people on PWD can't afford – low income
- Rent increases are capped

- Affordable housing – a person on PWD doesn't make one-quarter of what Pacifica's income threshold is
- Affordable, adaptive housing for folks with disabilities
- More affordable housing rent increase limits
- Subsidies for renters
- Overarching accessibility requirements
- Easier access to mobility aids

Mental Healthcare and Addiction

- Supports for people with disabilities and sexuality and intimacy – decriminalize sex work
- Better resources for mental health especially for homeless population
- Education for youth around addictions
- Mental Health support through wellness activities. Gardening, subsidized local food production

Comments:

- There is an education opportunity for the public to learn about substance abuse – lets get the conversation started
- A public campaign about the Pandora community to humanize those folks
- Mental health supports through wellness opportunities: community initiatives to produce food – creates food opportunities – tower gardens
- Better resources for mental health

Parks and Green Spaces

- More accessible community gardens. Tower gardens
- Rooftop farming (see Montreal) mandate on new builds

Comments:

- Rooftop farming – Montreal is taking advantage of the heat rising

Recreation:

- Invest in community centres – could provide mental health and addiction programs
- More programs such as the LIFE program
- If a gym is added it must have accessible equipment – precedent through the City of Regina Human Rights complaint settlement
- Crystal Pool replacement project to have adaptation programs
- Adaptive fitness centre for people with disabilities
- “Third Places” to gather/enjoy – places that do not cost money to enjoy – outside of work and home
- More funding for accessible recreation i.e., gyms
- Petting zoo – City to pay for animals

Comments:

- Invest in community centres

- Programming - more like the LIFE program CRD
- More funding for accessible facilities
- Adaptive fitness programs and facilities

Safety and Wellbeing

- Funding for anti-violence initiatives/support for people in independent living

Transportation

- Bike lanes should include tactile cues
- More City street accessible parking everywhere – currently hard to find/not enough
- Not safe enough passage for accessible parking on street
- Is there a city design consistency for curb ramps/tactile indicators?
- NO floating bus stops
- Fix floating bus stops
- Improve existing bus stops i.e., city hall's stop
- Enforce existing bylaws i.e., sidewalk sandwich boards that decrease movement
- Dedicated bus to airport with space for luggage
- Line item on budget to do “on demand” access i.e., curb ramps, tactile cues, audible lights
- Lit intersections should set up emergency lights (flash) everywhere – should be a standard tool for accessibility
- Free or very low-priced public transport

Comments:

- Bike lanes should include tactile cues
- Japan's transportation system as inspiration – Translink has made progress
- More accessible parking – not very many and they need more protection
- Is the City doing a policy on accessible parking?
- Size, ramps, tactile cues, etc. all need to be factored in
- Fix and get rid of the floating bus stops!
- Improve existing transit stops - the bus stop at City Hall/Centennial Square is very low, so the bus ramp is too steep
- We need a program like Regina has – curb ramps on demand
- Enforce the existing bylaw re: sandwich boards on sidewalks

Unhoused

- Create a “day in the life” experience for the public to get a glimpse of being a person who is unhoused
- Stop wasting so much money paying Bylaw to remove people from camping in parks and put it towards community education and addiction
- Develop a way for the public to get to know another side of the residents of Pandora

Comments:

- People need to see unhoused folks as part of our community



ACTIVITY 2 – Rank Council’s 8 Priorities

Activity Results:

1. Housing (13 dots)
2. Community Well-Being + Safety (5 dots)
3. Transportation (5 dots)

Followed by:

- Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment (3 dots)
- Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (3 dots)
- Economic Health and Community Vitality (3 dots)
- Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces (2 dots)
- Truth and Reconciliation (2 dots)

Council Priorities

Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship



Housing



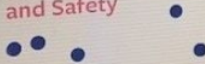
Transportation



Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces



Community Well-Being and Safety



Economic Health and Community Vitality



Truth and Reconciliation



Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment



YOUR CITY BUDGET
Tell us what matters most.



BUDGET COMMUNITY CONVERSATION #5 – Peers Victoria Resources Society

Wednesday, August 7, 2024 from 3:45-5:15 p.m.

#1 - 744 Fairview Road

7 Participants

Co-host: Leigh Elliott, Executive Director, Peers Victoria Resources Society

ACTIVITY 1 – Share Your Ideas

The following notes depict the agreed upon themes, the content of each sticky-note and the associated comments captured during the community conversation, when applicable.

Accessibility

Comments:

- We need more initiatives for neurodiversity

Bylaw

- No inventory of what's being taken. No records.
- They don't allow people to take packed up things.
- Don't abide by the rules. They take everything; paying to get stuff back \$100.
- They separate stuff and keep what they want
- Mustard Seed area right after cheque day
- Used to be able to say I'm a client of "Peers" and Bylaw would leave them alone
- Using vile language and disrespect
- Human rights violation

Comments:

- They take everything, every time – purses, backpacks, bedding, clothes, their food, cases of pop (i.e., the day after cheque day)
- They disrespect you, steal yourself and give you garbage back/not your stuff.
- You need to pay \$100 to get your stuff back from Bylaw. It used to be more; up to \$700.
- There are human violations going on
- One bylaw officer took my lingerie
- We've watched them take what they want to keep, separate for own use and what they want to give back
- Bylaw doesn't keep track of the stuff that they take. We take pictures.
- Bylaw no longer makes a record of what they take. It takes too much time.
- In front of Mustard Seed, people are taking people's stuff and throwing belongings in the garbage

- They are removing tents and Peers spends at least \$15,000 a year on replacing people's tents
- Bylaw needs to be abolished
- They need trauma-informed training
- Secure storage is needed for vulnerable people. Shelters only take one bag? Where do you store your stuff so that it doesn't get stolen or Bylaw doesn't remove it?

Community/Business/Climate Action

- Art day hosted by the City; certain number of unhoused artisans help destigmatize and promote
- Arts and culture events that foster community building
- Tear down gates and fences of business owners
- More opportunities for clean-up employment (i.e., simple parks clean-up with rewards (paid hourly) gives them purpose
- Start-up help (Bastion)
- Granville Island type idea with small businesses
- Refurbishing store idea; helps keep things

Comments:

- Paid work for people to give back (i.e., cleaning up a City park)
- Cook Street Village feels more uptight than it used to be; businesses have lost a lot of their charm businesses (mom and pop stores no longer there)
- More food truck villages
- Need something like Granville Island Market to support small business/create charm
- Cook Street Village – food truck section is amazing – need more of these types of things
- More markets that attract mom and pop-style shops.
- Support outdoor markets
- City could provide a reduced fee/no fee for people to sell their products in downtown markets (Indigenous can sell there for no fee but everyone should be able to sell their wares)
- Bastion Square Market is the only one that will allow people to pay a fee per day; others want you to pay a fee for the whole season
- Could people sell their stuff at markets, no need to pay a fee to do business there?
- Only Indigenous people can sell without paying a fee, but it should extend to all cultures
- Commercial vacancies on Wharf Street – can they be used in some way to support opportunities for artists?
- We have amazing cottage industries – need to be able to market Victoria (as part of Vancouver Island) and profit it from it some how
- Market Victoria as a gateway to Vancouver Island

- EVENT IDEA: An arts and culture day that is hosted by the City with some spots for unhoused artists and housed artists – and invite the community to attend – a community building event that provides opportunity for people to value what all people bring – a destigmatizing event and offers opportunity for people to make some money
- Person who has been unhoused for four years has been binning and wants to open a refurbishing store – sustainable for the environment and for people – gets crap off the street

Community Hub Model

- Provide space for hub
- A hub – a rep from Peers, detox, etc. for one-stop for folks in crisis

Comments:

- IDEA: The need for a community hub with reps from Peers, BC Housing, SOLID, detox, housing, domestic violence, training – all in one to make it easier for people to access services and it would assist with referrals
- City could fund/provide the space and bring in the subject matter experts
- Aims to help people with complex needs
- Breaks down service silos
- Enables services to talk to one another and provide knowledge-sharing
- Better use of resources
- Systemic change is needed
- Would not need to compete for the same funding necessarily
- Would encourage collaboration among the City and social service agencies/organizations

Education

- Education about addicts. We are all humans.
- Bring back that humanity

Comments:

- Share peoples' stories (who they are; why they are there on the street)
- People are fearful of the unhoused
- People forget that people on the streets are human
- We don't know what people are going through
- Fear – how to combat it?
- How do we remind people how to be human to others?

Harm Reduction | Safety

- Mental wellbeing; mental wellbeing for seniors
- Drug/elderly care

- A place where the unhoused and mentally ill can go to sit and have a person(s) they can talk to as well as a guaranteed place to get daily medication
- Harm reduction (repeated)
- Harm reduction safety and information
- Harm reduction supplies should be available where the safe disposal boxes are, checking and emptying
- Safe supply initiatives
- 24-hour on-site using
- Bringing vulnerable community together (bbqs)
- BBQ camp-outs teaching about work; how to take care of each other
- Acceptance of community members, neuro diverse, gender diverse
- Missing and murdered movement
- Dates for cold weather protocols – not temperatures
- Emergency weather protocols planned in advance (more preparation)
- Street lights (James Bay)
- Safe streets
- Housing/Food

Comments:

- Trans-hate is out there; need safe spaces; I need to isolate; I feel scared to be trans.
- People need emotional safety
- Need safe harm supplies, snacks, water and a safe place to be; a lot of people are alone
- People need a community safety net
- People are traumatized by the helplessness we are all feeling in the face of the pain on the streets
- I think everyone can be helped; they just need to get past what they're going through
- Areas around the city where they can feel safe and be seen and not feel invisible
- If you don't look at me; I'm not real; you need to look at people and show that you see them; it's a sign of respect
- People should feel accepted, no matter what
- Don't throw homeless, neurodiverse, mentally ill and drug-addicted under the bus
- A safe place to be on the streets (i.e., in civic buildings) would show acceptance/tolerance
- Everyone has stuff in their backyard they don't want. Ignoring it doesn't help
- Where to go when people fire you for no reason; where do you go for help?
- EVENT IDEA: A community barbecue – bringing people together (housed, unhoused, drug-addicted, trans, etc.) to reduce fear and increase understanding
- We need to bridge the gap between people with money and the unhoused
- Cool Aid building had sandwich gatherings – encouraged people – everyone to come together to laugh and talk
- Events for families, for all
- We don't want our streets too crazy – protect what kids on the street see

- Glad that open drug use on street was taken away to protect our community and street
- People shouldn't be doing drugs in front of children
- Keep our streets safe
- Need more streetlights
- James Bay does not feel safe (James Bay is really dark; more lighting is needed; perhaps more motion-sensor type lights). Behind the Thrifty's in James Bay is very dark.
- Downtown is not too bad for lighting.
- Cold Weather Protocol:
 - Need more preparation to have proper staffing resources
 - Needs to be date range based (not temperature or weather-based) i.e., starts in mid-October.
 - Not just based on snow. Indicators keep changing.
- Tear down fencing around businesses to be more friendly and welcoming. Cook Street Village (liquor store and newer apartment building and section of businesses; back part has fencing which feels unwelcoming and that you're not good enough to go there). But some businesses need fencing for safety.
- Can we trade the current cops for new ones?

Housing

- Commercial spaces that are sitting empty
- Incentives to help vulnerable community
- More low-barrier housing options with trained staff/lived experience
- Better supportive housing, trained staff (only hire staff who have taken a course)
- We need to overcome our fear. We need to help each other.
- Low income or affordable housing disability
- A building in which people experienced with OD/accidental death can take the spouse to. There is nothing here for that specific. And being someone who went/is going through it, my partner could have really used this/friends, etc.
- Find a place for people – shelter – home – don't shuffle them
- Mix low income in with new builds
- Homeowner incentives for housing vulnerable people
- Housing

Comments:

- Offer property tax incentives for homeowners to rent to the unhoused (i.e., basement suites, if they have land available).
- Can the City set guidelines for homeowners who rent their property?
- Rezoning and redevelopment – when they move the tenants, they don't always give people the right of first refusal when they come back to the renovated building
- Create incentives to create affordable housing

- Empty commercial spaces could be used (can't let places sit around so long)
- James Bay gas station is wanted by the community but it's been sitting there forever but not done by the developer
- Wharf Street up to the bridge has a lot of vacancies – can something be done?
- More low-barrier housing
- Staff at low-barrier places need more training; hire those with lived experience
- More accessible units/housing
- Combine regular housing and low-income housing in same building
- What about refurbishing stores to help unhoused invest in themselves and make money while saving garbage from the landfill

Mental Health

- Counselling
- I would like to see more neuro-diverse awareness/inclusion for autistic adults (i.e., art programs)
- More mental health workers

Comments:

- Mentally ill; drug addicted; neurodivergence – all being throwed under the bus
- Mentally ill don't get their medication
- I would like to see more neuro-diverse awareness/inclusion for autistic adults; there's programs for kids but not adults (i.e., art programs)
- Shared with participants: Accessibility training for staff re: neurodiversity (not just the built environment)
- City could offer free neurodivergence workshops for NGOs

Unhoused | Sheltering

- Doing more with homeless communities
- Housing
- Housing Storage
- Housing
- Allow unhoused to self-govern
- Food programs
- Open parkades for night sheltering
- Shelters only allow one bag so folks are hesitant to go to shelter

Comments:

- Why are we pushing people around who don't have a place to go?
- Why not invest in land to create a facility for people instead of investing in more Bylaw officers?

- Give people the opportunity for self-governance where they are sheltering
- Open the City's parkades for people to shelter at night
- There are pieces of land that could be bought for use for sheltering
- Shared: City's investment in new low-barrier access hub on Dowler Place to be operated by SOLID
- Provide access to existing buildings that are not in use
- It's traumatizing to the community observing unhoused people; what can people do to help?
- If there was one place you could go (i.e., a 10-acre farm and perfectly be okay to do what you want – but also to have supports to detox)
- Want to see humanity deal with these issues
- It pains me to see so much pain
- Everyone needs to be helped
- Nothing for neuro-divergent adults (i.e., for autistic adults); very little understanding out there (need public education for autistic people)
- Shared with participants: City is about to launch sensory accessibility training for frontline employees
- Secure storage facilities are needed for people who are unhoused (i.e., the vacant Canadian Tire store or other downtown location)
- Some vulnerable people would volunteer to help keep people's belongings secure
- A lot of people have been displaced from their homes (i.e., people had homes years ago but now find them on their streets)
- Cost of living keeps going up



ACTIVITY 2 – Rank Council’s 8 Priorities

1. Housing (10 dots)
2. Community Wellbeing and Safety (7 dots)
3. Truth and Reconciliation (7 dots)

Followed by:

- Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment (2 dots)
- Economic Health and Community Vitality (2 dots)
- Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces (2 dots)
- Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (0 dots)
- Transportation (0 dots)

Council Priorities

Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship

Housing



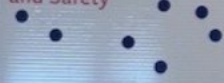
Transportation

Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces



Community Well-Being and Safety

Economic Health and Community Vitality



Truth and Reconciliation

Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment



Tell us what matters most.

www.council.vic.gov.au



Budget Community Conversation #6: Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness

Thursday, August 8, 2024, Noon-2 p.m.

Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness, 2860 Quadra Street

14 participants

Co-hosts: Nikki Wilkinson, Land-Based Healing Program Manager and Graham Kelly, Youth Programs and Services Coordinator

ACTIVITY 1 – Share Your Ideas

The following notes depict the agreed-upon themes, the content of each sticky note and the associated comments captured during the community conversation, when applicable.

Accessibility

- Kicked off disability PWD payments at 65, and no CPP if you are unhoused
- Accessibility needs to be a focus
- Disability issue – City isn't built for people with disabilities

Comments:

- I find a lot of disability barriers within shelters.

Arts & Culture

- Open mic night for unhoused to introduce themselves and their journeys (Speakers Corner)
- Have a screening of Sitting with Grace documentary in Centennial Square to be inclusive of the unhoused people in the square rather than pushing them aside for events
- Unhoused people need a space for art to be able to heal, create and sell, iHart did this work but they closed because of funding cuts
- We need needles for beading, sewing and weaving

Comments:

- We need creative outlets to hold onto our culture and have a way to positively contribute (i.e. photography, horticulture)
- Often the events in Centennial Square displace unhoused people rather than considering and including them

Bylaw

- Bylaw issues
- Bylaw takes everything in a tent, without giving people a chance to gather their stuff and move along (backpacks, bus tickets, food, ID)
- You have to pay to get your stuff back? \$130 depends on how much you have
- They take your stuff, and you can't get it back because it's "misplaced"
- You only get 3 days to get your stuff, if they didn't throw it right out
- If the bylaw takes your stuff it takes the entire next day to try and get it back to only have it taken again

- Bylaw took my sleeping bag, tent and backpack and threw it in the garbage, they told me to go back to the charity to get another tent, sleeping bag, and backpack.

Comments:

- Bylaw just throws our stuff out
- You used to be able to get your stuff back from Bylaw but not anymore
- Bylaw “misplaces” stuff
- How do the organizations giving the tents, sleeping bags, etc. feel about Bylaw wasting their money?
- 7 a.m. is a really tough time for people to get up and get moving when you’ve been cold all night
- Bylaw goes and takes people’s stuff so that the person has to spend the next day trying to acquire more, a waste of a day and an organization's resources
- Where does Bylaw take our stuff?
- How much garbage are they sending to the landfill each week?
- Depending how much stuff bylaw takes depends on if you have to pay to get it back or not, the more they take the more you pay
- We’re often told our stuff is gone but they don’t label it or look for it

Cost of Living

- “SoberFest” way too expensive at \$40/ticket

Health (Physical & Mental)

- Cultural safety training for healthcare staff
- Discrimination in healthcare
- I got labelled as “contagious” in the hospital when I was there for a heart attack and not contagious because of being Indigenous
- We are so exhausted
- FNHA (First Nations Housing Authority) needs to give the same benefits as those living on-reserve to those who live off-reserve
- For all 3 hospitals there is 1 Indigenous Liaison Nurse who works Mon-Friday 9-5

Comments:

- Please advocate Island Health to have more than 1 Indigenous Liaison nurse for all three hospitals
- Jubilee Hospital treats Indigenous people lower than the dirt of your shoe
- Racism against Indigenous people at the hospital is terrible
- If people need extra care, they don’t provide it
- Staff assume that because you are Indigenous you are drunk and dangerous
- Not every staff member but Indigenous people get discriminated against regularly
- If you have an advocate with you, they change their behaviour but it’s rare to have an advocate you can bring
- Even if you need care, they will send you home if you don’t have someone with you who will fight for you

Housing

- First Nations housing for single people (currently only family)
- Families can't share a house because if your name isn't on the lease, you can't receive supplemental income support
- Housing for married couples
- When it comes to housing, better mental health screens to better place people
- Install a bulletin board at Centennial Square that explains what services are available and where
- The law requires a landlord to give 24 hours' notice of eviction, on the streets we get no notice
- Why is there provincial housing near Uptown that is still sitting empty?
- We need mini homes on a piece of land
- Housing for working people (need affordable housing)
- Housing for everyone
- BC housing only allows someone to stay with you for 2 weeks out of a year, more than that and you are evicted, I could rent a house for me and my 2 adult children who are homeless but BC Housing won't allow it

Comments:

- Currently families need to split up and married couples need to separate to get housing
- We need housing for couples, often they have to separate to get into housing, no one should have to break up their family to get safe housing
- We need housing for single Indigenous people
- We need pieces of land where people can live outdoors
- Housing needs to allow pets; my pet is the most important thing in the world to me
- Can't get supplemental income if my name is not on the lease; this roadblocks me
- We need to open a recovery house for those who leave the hospital but are unhoused, allowing people to heal in a safe, warm environment
- Homes being built are for the middle-class
- Rent needs to come down
- Needing a reference is a big hurdle, they often want 5 references and for you to apply online with a credit check, we need a way that someone can vouch for a person
- After being kicked out of supportive housing, you have to wait a year to get back on the list
- I'm always walking on eggshells trying not to get labelled as a problem and losing my housing

Infrastructure

- Free phone booth (or just pay phone)
- Toilets on Pandora
- More public washrooms
- Place to charge phones
- Free phone access
- Need laundry facilities, only one location (Anwim)

- 1. Blanshard & Johnson 2. Yates & Quadra both have locked porta potties not with a construction site, we need them on Pandora
- We need portable and staffed showers and washroom (AECH has a SeaCan washroom all ready to go but sitting in storage)

Comments:

- If you can put a porta potty outside a construction site, why can't we put some on Pandora?
- The washroom at Centennial Square is always closed for cleaning
- Blocking unhoused people from using the bathroom doesn't eliminate their needs or make them go away

Law Enforcement (Bylaw & Police)

- Police need to carry Naloxone on them
- Naloxone training for police and bylaw
- Cultural training for police and bylaw
- Police give tickets to people smoking in the park but ignore the person who is slumped over

Comments:

- Bylaw needs sensitivity training
- Bylaw needs cultural training and someone to look at the practices of bylaw

Reconciliation

- All Residential School survivors and their descendants should get a PTSD dog
- "Indian time" -- it happens when it happens
- How do you keep your culture when you're homeless?

Comments:

- No one helps us preserve our culture when you are unhoused; I need my culture
- Off-reserve people don't get anything; most of us had to leave because staying wasn't safe or healthy
- People living off-reserve should have the same rights as people living on-reserve
- Why doesn't the City recognize urban Indigenous people? We are here and we should count too
- We need access to our natural medicines

Safety

- Safety on Pandora
- Safety is not always the police
- Cultural safety training for City Staff/frontline workers

Comments:

- We keep each other safe because the system does not
- We have to use the buddy system to stay safe
- Crime is up which impacts the fear

Unhoused People & Social Supports

- Budgets get cut and staff lose jobs
- Better mental health screening when applying for housing
- Better training for shelter staff
- Van for volunteers to do outreach
- Provide unhoused people with art activities like photography, painting, carving, beading, etc.
- People need activities to keep them busy when in recovery, use these people as volunteers to provide Indigenous cultural-based support
- An unhoused, diabetic person does not get the support they need to manage their diabetes
- Staff at supportive housing not equipped with training to deal with mental health and addiction
- Free laundry used to be available at Cook & Yates
- More programs specifically for First Nations, specifically cultural
- Don't paint everyone with the same brush
- 7am is too early to make people wake up and pack their stuff
- Mental health screening for supportive housing needs to be improved
- Outreach workers look for any reason to kick you out of supportive housing
- Rumours to staff to kick someone out – staff will believe it
- The shelter lost my husband's ashes when I went to hospital
- VNFC shelter is not nice
- Coalition (ACEH) is a great place
- Families need to break up and separate to get housing
- People need their pets
- Discrimination right away for walking into the mall (Bay Centre), got escorted out by police
- Mobile outreach support
- Night outreach hours, on foot
- Beyond the once-a-year count, does anyone take notes or ask questions? Where are you on your journey?
- Low wages for outreach workers – high turnover
- Exhaustion for everyone (unhoused, staff)
- We need to be nicer to the homeless, people are trying
- Where is the compassion?
- People without homes are people
- Need more of a mental health focus
- People on the street are treated like garbage, not everyone is a bad person
- We need reward programs if you're in recovery and working hard that should be recognized

- Memorial around City Hall to show respect for those we've lost
- Utilize volunteers, give them a vest or lanyard that you earn after receiving training
- Sandy Merriman – need to be there by 2 am – need to be more flexible
- Staff are hard on people staying there (burnout)
- We need programs to be co-piloted by those with lived experience
- We need storage for our stuff before I go to work I have to go to Crystal Pool to pay for 2 to store my stuff for the day
- Wheels for Recovery is a really important program and needs funding to keep operating – they will pick you up and take you to any appointments (not just medical), and they will even stay with you if you want to have their support during the appointment
- You need to pay your showers and schedule them at Anwim

Comments:

- Need to be clean 2-3 weeks before you can have a mental health screening for housing.
- They expect people to be clean for 2-3 weeks before getting a mental health assessment that's too late, people need support while they are getting clean
- Why does the City get to waste other organizations' money? Bylaw took my sleeping bag, tent and backpack and threw it in the garbage, they told me to go back to the charity to get another tent, sleeping bag and backpack. What a waste of money and time never mind the amount of garbage unnecessarily getting sent to the landfill
- Some unhoused people want to live outside, why can't we buy some land for them to safely live outside?
- Unhoused are already their own community
- Band-aid solutions aren't working
- No one should be homeless, especially Indigenous people; this was their land
- The resources aren't enough
- People working full-time, still have to sleep outside
- Frustrating and tiring to set up and tear down the tent while you're working full-time
- Absolutely exhausting to be working full-time and sleeping outside; I feel like giving up, I'm working full time, still sleeping outside, I'm exhausted
- How am I supposed to work if I don't have anywhere to store my stuff or wash my clothes?
- People have to get creative with where they store it, including using lockers at Crystal Pool
- Staff that work a homeless organizations are hard on people
- I need to use the hand dryer at Our Place to warm up my tummy to ease my pain, I get hassled by the staff but I have no other option
- Where I live was the first supported housing built and we still don't have our permanent staff
- Casual staff don't cut it in supportive housing
- Lots of turnover with staff – very hard work, no training, not enough money, they need higher wages
- Exhaustion across the board, for everyone
- Each unhoused person needs their own social worker, to build trust and safety
- Each time you get a new social worker, you have to re-tell your trauma story and that is painful and exhausting
- Racism and discrimination are rampant for Indigenous people

- After treatment, you need a safe place to go rather than right back to the streets surrounded by drugs and alcohol
- It's time to create space for those who are more comfortable in tents
- You need to start, not just talk
- There are lots of empty buildings and gyms, why aren't we using those to keep people dry and warm?
- Create a community for RVs, people can get old ones
- Animals are part of our families; we had to break up our family to get safe housing, that's not right. I shouldn't have to give up my pet, my only family, to get housing
- We need an Indigenous volunteer organization to give people in recovery something to do and to empower them
- Funding cuts mean people lose their jobs
- We need an education program because people don't know what to do, they are afraid
- Did you know police don't carry Naloxone?
- It's hard to identify staff from regular people, we need a way to identify who has resources, and is approachable/won't report you
- We keep each other safe because the system doesn't
- We have to use a buddy system to stay safe
- We are judged right out of the gate based on assumptions
- There is a huge need for nighttime staff
- We need funding for a van to pick people up and to help them
- We need monthly bus passes more than bus tickets
- We need somewhere to go during the day, especially if you aren't feeling well
- Limiting sheltering to only 3 parks because the neighbours are mad, this is not good
- If organizations didn't have to buy so many tents, we could fund more initiatives
- Fear is the root of the issues, us vs them mentality
- There are a huge number of unhoused people compared to the 60s & 70s
- Supplemental income restrictions limit the ability to get a place and then focus on getting work
- Support workers aren't trained properly and aren't equipped to deal with mental health and addictions properly because there is this gap; so many situations arise that are preventable but are happening because of the staff's lack of skill and training (i.e., how to de-escalate a situation)
- I get kicked out of the mall right away, not letting people sit who look unhoused
- We need access to laundry facilities
- The people that want to change are the ones who need the most help
- No one asks questions and keeps track of people on the street; we need people out on the streets checking on people
- We need free laundry
- We need a place to store important things like ID, charge our phones
- It's important for us to memorialize those who have died and continue to die
- A bulletin board in Centennial Square would be a good place to post information about events, showers, resources, washrooms, information for unhoused folks) – not everyone has access to the internet

- We are treated like garbage, are a lot of good people who are homeless
- It's confusing and frustrating that people don't view us as people
- People need to be nicer to homeless people
- Treatment by staff who don't take their job seriously cause harm
- The Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness helps and feeds people
- QomQem provides us with cultural programming
- There is no compassion for large life events (i.e. death of a partner, serious illness, assault)
- Unhoused people need compassion



Post-Conversation Input

One participant shared their ideas in writing after the conversation, which have been transcribed below: after the conversation, which have been transcribed below:

- Core emphasis will be the streets the main artery for a healthy cityThe streets will focus on happiness, connections and parks Culture has to be everywhere, no culture = dead city Needs to be about the people and dynamism with room for spontaneity Each part of the city would have a culture of its own, this provides a healthy rivalry Should be near self-sufficient for energy use EV mobility Green

cars Urban design commensurate with the mental development of humans Creative spaces – walls/paintings/areas that artists could use and keep clean and safe Paradigm shifter cities Almost every piece of land, rooftops, roadsides and empty land would be for organic farming by neighbours providing food and interaction (cooler air) Parts of the city designed by an architect from a different culture. Status painting from culture would decorate the streets of that part Amalgamation economics and human resilience Public spaces should have ample space to bring people out of their homes and TVs, a chance to socialize Any art near the road/paint walls Efficiency: the city would pick energy stars from those who are highly efficient (in any activity). Efficiency would be a prime sport, people would compete in the best ways to do stuff New homes need to be configurable nanomachines, thus move the whale wall if necessary or change the colour when needed and integrate furniture People would spend time “programming” physical spaces within their homes. Each home would display the creativity of the inhabitant The city must have one massive university/college teaching almost every endeavour The city will be powered by the intellectual horsepower of this university Lights/street lights will be activated by radio signals from phones, less light pollution and better power usage Core emphasis will be the streets the main artery for a healthy city

- The streets will focus on happiness, connections and parks
- Culture has to be everywhere, no culture = dead city
- Needs to be about the people and dynamism with room for spontaneity
- Each part of the city would have a culture of its own, this provides a healthy rivalry
- Should be near self-sufficient for energy use
- EV mobility
- Green cars
- Urban design commensurate with the mental development of humans
- Creative spaces – walls/paintings/areas that artists could use and keep clean and safe
- Paradigm shifter cities
- Almost every piece of land, rooftops, roadsides and empty land would be for organic farming by neighbours providing food and interaction (cooler air)
- Parts of the city designed by an architect from a different culture. Status painting from culture would decorate the streets of that part
- Amalgamation economics and human resilience
- Public spaces should have ample space to bring people out of their homes and TVs, a chance to socialize
- Any art near the road/paint walls
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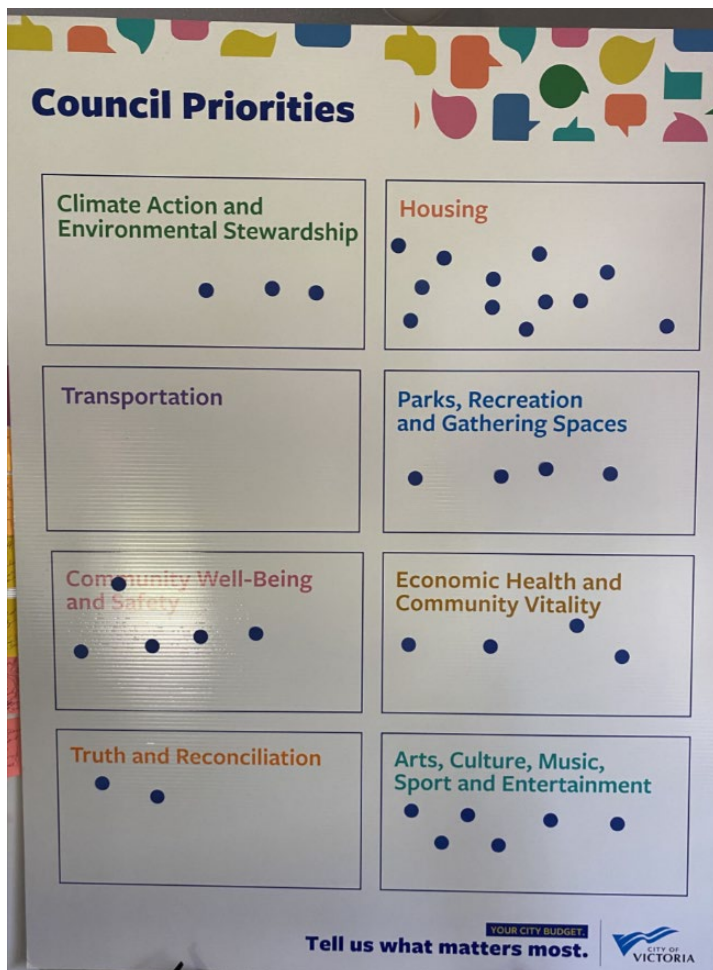
ACTIVITY 2 – Rank Council’s 8 Priorities

Activity Results:

1. Housing (12 dots)
2. Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment (6 dots)
3. Community Well-Being and Safety (5 dots)

Followed by:

- Economic Health and Community Vitality (4 dots)
- Parks, Recreation, and Gathering Spaces (4 dots)
- Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (3 dots)
- Truth and Reconciliation (2 dots)
- Transportation (0 dots)



Budget Community Conversation #7: Victoria Pride Society

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 from 4-6 p.m.

Victoria City Hall, Songhees Board Room, 1 Centennial Square

11 participants

Co-host: Ace Mann, President, Victoria Pride Society

ACTIVITY 1 – Share Your Ideas

The following notes depict the agreed-upon themes, the content of each sticky note and the associated comments captured during the community conversation, when applicable.

Accessibility

- Funding to make venues physically accessible
- Queer assisted living for elders etc. so they don't have to go back in the closet
- Centralized website for resources/supports
- Healthy food accessibility – could City partner with farms to subsidize and distribute affordable food?

Comments:

- Funding to make more avenues accessible
- Include air quality in accessibility considerations (long covid, wildfire smoke, immuno-compromised)
- Venues need to include air quality information with their accessibility information
- We need greater awareness regarding what a white cane/white mobility cane means

Arts and Culture

- Low cost, fully equipped performance venues suitable for 100-150 people
- Affordable space for 2SLGBTQ+ artists – studio, rehearsal and performance space
- More family friendly/sober events
- Funding for event venue rental support
- Potential new venues for arts and culture - existing vacant buildings for example
- An elevator for the VEC!!!!!!!!!!!! (Victoria Event Centre)
- Subsidies for venues – to offer lower rental rates
- Projects like the purchase of Herman's! See Centre A in Vancouver
- Community Arts Collective Space – nurtures a resilient community
- Accessibility: venues and the cost to make it accessible – acceptance
- Funding for indigenous art/theatre/music projects
- Funding for the pride parade so there is less reliance on private sponsors
- Keep funding FIG grant
- Free arts initiatives – music and art lessons and mentorships
- Underwrite a concert/chat series
- A “hub” office with information brochures and maybe staff for Queer folks. New crystal pool?
- Helping small non-profits/charities with grants (FAQ's info sessions, etc.)

- Non-profit support as funding dries up (BCAC, Canadian Heritage, Canada Council funding all decreasing)
- Education on grants that the city offers – online and in person
- Year-round queer programming
- A space for people to come and feel creative – opportunity for anyone, any age to create
- Cultural Event Liaisons to reduce police presence - Traffic control costs are so high for parade
- City of Victoria contracts = need cancellation clause for hate groups (i.e., VCC)

Comments:

- Need low-cost fully equipped venues for 100-250 people – maybe subsidize the venues so they can offer space at low cost. Use existing spaces – vacant businesses for example
- Community arts collective space - where people can connect like QVCC functional arts and crafts – for creativity and connection
- Education on grants that the City offers
- Non-profit support as funding dries up
- More funding for Pride
- Year-round queer programming – a steady stream of funding so people aren't burning out – Pride Society helping with queer artists for example
- Cultural event liaisons
- Free arts initiatives – lessons for all ages spaces to explore creativity – especially for Queer folks to gather
- The opposite of trauma is play
- A resource centre for 2SLGBTQIA+ - working towards the dream situation could start with a single room and someone working there with a supply of pamphlets
- Marketing has to connect with the communities we want to reach
- Subsidization for venues to offer lower rates
- Investigating existing places that could become venues (i.e. United Church)
- More money to Indigenous arts and cultural pride
- More free spaces to gather; functional arts spaces
- Cost of living is pushing creatives out
- More funding for Pride Parade so that VPS is less dependent on corporate sponsors

Climate

- Initiatives to help people build relationships with the land, water and nature so they will care for it!
- Water conservation! Water saving tanks for gardens
- ♥ the cycling trajectory – can we keep it going??
- Support incentives for “greener” options – e-bikes, heat pumps, etc.
- Take care of land with sustainable food systems, healthy food for people

Comments:

- Support incentives for green things like e-bikes and heat pumps

Economic

- Cost of living – we are losing so many people who are awesome!

Education and Advocacy

- Education about homeless community bring back their humanity
- Education around trans issues
- Tell stories about queer community ie “People of New York” “Queers of Victoria”

Comments:

- For City: a public service campaign about trans/queer people – a giant communications challenge but also a giant communications opportunity
- Share positive stories of queer people, diverse types of families
- More bike education information from the City, not just from Capital Bike

Grants

- Grants for BIPOC community members to go back to school
- More money for My Great Neighbourhood
- Combatting anti-sogi activism
- Lack of continuing grant funding for ongoing programs

Health | Mental Health

- A “Queer” resource centre for 2SLGBTQ+ community with counselling, workshops, resource groups, youth drop-ins, queer health etc to help people navigate the health care system – list of queer friendly resources
- Hiring doctors and medical practitioners - health accessibility for 2SLGBTQ+ community
- Mental health cost - many unable to access
- Indoor air quality infrastructure – fire season, COVID, other illness
- Covid safe spaces and venues (all the immunocompromised people miss going out!)
- Counselling isn’t regulated across Canada
- Peer support group for Queer Community – funding for Transcare BC for example
- Improving access to healthcare for trans and 2SLGBTQ+ individuals = i.e., pregnancy – workplace benefits many need to exist the workplace to be gender blind
- Make DATA driven decisions around gender/community health
- Healthcare isn’t always safe or comfortable for trans people
- More mental health and crisis counsellors responding to mental health and social crises instead of with police
- Safe supply, opioid crisis support
- Mental health supports
- Build/fund more mental health facilities/supports
- Mental health supports
- Extended mental health support – especially for queer community

Comments:

- Improving healthcare for 2SLGBTQIA+ is key
- Healthcare for trans folks – expanding options that are safe
- Island Sexual Health is full so people can't access important gender-affirming health care
- We need local advocates to help people navigate health care and specialists
- Resources to navigate the healthcare system – spaces for knowledge sharing
- More mental health and crisis counselling
- Cost is a significant barrier to accessing mental health support
- Queer-assisted living is a critical issue; most queer people go back into the closet in order to access care and services as an older adult (Winnipeg example)
- A mental health peer support group – doesn't replace professionals but could be a tool – specifically useful for transcare
- We need a peer support group/network that has continuity of funding
- Safe supply

Housing

- Housing that allows for pets
- Affordable housing for renters and buyers
- Building more low-income student housing
- Increased/prioritized subsidized housing for BC housing over affordable housing (geared to income) builds
- Housing crisis solutions – especially Co-ops! Can we stop letting people own if they don't live here?
- Approve more housing construction for all
- Support for co-ops
- 2SLGBTQ+ housing (supportive especially for seniors and youth)
- 2SLGBTQ+ housing supports
- Easy and accessible housing
- “affordable” is not affordable – is there transparency?
- Housing of all kinds! Not limited to societal norms

Comments:

- Low-income student housing
- Build more affordable housing
- 2SLGBTQ+ housing supports and co-ops affordable space – what is considered affordable is laughable
- The cost of living here is contributing to losing so many people
- Humanize unhoused people

Infrastructure

- All the Vic West upgrades – Yay! More! Vic West rec centre is so sad. We need bathrooms too.
- Can we have outdoor pools?! Like in Vancouver?

Comments:

- We need a 2SLGBTQIA+ resource centre (a service hub)

Parks and Green Spaces

- Native plants in public spaces (rewilding and habitat for bees and pollinators)
- Native plant initiatives (can we please ban invasive species?)
- Community gardens, green space, community orchards

Comments:

- Move to native plants in public spaces
- Outdoor pools please!
- More community gardens, orchards and green space

Recreation

- Programs for 2SLGBTQ+ people
- Grants for adults to participate in sports – there are lots for kids and to organize, but not for an adult to play hockey for example
- 2SLGBTQ+ sports in rec centres?
- Funding for 2SLGBTQ+ sports teams and programming

Comments:

- 2SLGBTQ+ sports in recreation centres
- Funding for 2SLGBTQ+ sports teams

Safety

- Education on interacting with supervised consumption sites and support centres
- Safe drug consumption sites
- Crisis support/sensitivity training for bylaw/police
- More community led crisis response teams
- Improved supports for reporting discrimination, harassment and potential hate crimes
- Combatting anti-trans legislation, policies, activism
- Developing a policy to keep hate groups from using public spaces for their events
- Making sure anti-trans/hate groups can't book meeting spaces
- Support/resources to show equity deserving people how to report hate crimes. Get non-police support etc.
- Non-police solutions to crisis and crime
- A model where the first report of sexual crimes to social workers and then decide if reporting to police – to try to get more people to report
- Police reform and reeducation
- Defund VicPD
- Stop the sweeps of Pandora, Vic West, etc, it doesn't solve anything!
- Stopping the Sweeps

Comments:

- Need greater information/education on consumption sites and the unhoused
- We need help combatting anti-SOGI rhetoric
- There is a dehumanization of these folks
- Combatting anti-trans hate
- Expand support for anti-hate
- Police reform and re-education; queer people don't report because VicPD isn't safe
- Non-police solutions to crises and crime
- Cultural liaisons could help reduce the need for VicPD
- Non-police support for hate crimes/mental health crisis
- Avenue to explore hate-crime reports
- Stop the sweeps; we must sweeps
- Why doesn't Bylaw give out information to people?

Transportation

- Fund the Island rail
- More bike safety
- Increased transit routes – more buses, better timing
- Accessible – the issue of the blind crossing bike lanes
- Education on how cars and cyclists can share the roads and how to use the bike lanes
- More bike lanes – and safety improvements on wharf street
- City bike education – not just capital bike – who has right of way etc.
- I ♥ public transit
- BC transit – driver education regarding the lowering access ramps and waiting for visually impaired to sit down

Comments:

- Support green options
- Bring back Island Rail
- More bike lanes
- Address the safety issues on Wharf Street (some people mentioned avoid using it because it feels unsafe)
- Let's do education on how cars and bikes can get along
- Increased transit routes
- More buses more frequently; buses are often early or late, making it hard to rely on them.



Post-Community Conversation Input

The Victoria Pride Society provided additional input by email after the community conversation.

1. To add to this discussion, the group would like to add:

Car/vehicle noise restrictions: With people living downtown there is a noticeable increase in vehicles seemingly without mufflers or just vehicles that are loud for the sake of the decibels. While high-rise or downtown living being sometimes more cost-friendly (not having to own a car, making commutes walkable, contributing to building up and not out) it ends up feeling sometimes more difficult to enjoy being downtown and take in the "beautification and parks" that the city tries hard to foster when the men on the "crotch rockets" are forcing their noise on other people.

More wheelchair accessible "ramps" on beaches/grass: There are long, wide (often blue) mesh runways that have been used to provide more structure to precarious terrain like sand or grass which allow wheelchairs to more easily navigate the space. At the pride festival a few years ago, we tried to rent these but even the disability resource center only had access to 2-3 or something of the sort. We've heard they're very beneficial when people can use them and so having more in the city would be great.

More grants/funding for elevators in heritage buildings: This seems to be along the lines of making spaces accessible even in the downtown core or other areas where the spaces are heritage/longstanding.

More funding towards initiatives like what Crystal Pool is doing with VPS right now re: queer swim nights. VPS and Crystal Pool have now done 3 GSRD swim nights at the pool and we have only heard INCREDIBLE feedback. There have been a lot of adults and watching them giggle like children on the water slide or playing on the inflatable obstacle course has been such a light in my spirit. I think, if they were to hold more in the fall, the attendance would pick up now that people know about it. People LOVE these. Especially when queer bodies are often gawked at, having these safe spaces is so important for people who are marginalized.

2. Two more things for feedback from the meeting that I don't think I said: It's wild to me that "environment" is a separate category on the board we put our priorities on. I get why, but I also would encourage a paradigm shift that acknowledges that all issues fall within the environment category.

We need a planet to live and thrive on, and all the issues our city faces will only increase as the planet warms. Homelessness, cost of living, crime, etc. will continue increasing without very clever forward thinking and planning. These are not normal economic times! The next 10 years are so important for preventing the worst effects of the climate crisis.

Climate Scientists have been sounding the alarm for decades that we need to be carbon neutral by 2030, and we are seeing that global warming has accelerated even faster than predicted. We can't do the work for the whole world, but I think Victoria can and should lead the charge. This means taking progressive action to take care of our land, drastically improve our treatment of water waste (ie using the ocean as a dumping ground should stop and management of septic tanks needs to be intensely monitored). It also means proactively safeguarding our community as we approach unprecedented climate change on the island, including water supply and seafood issues. The city can also contribute through communications on social media, email, website, and posters to help educate the public.

It would be ideal if we stop letting golf courses use potable water... Partnering with the many amazing local environmental organizations will help! Supporting cycling infrastructure, efficient and reliable public transport as well as walkable living areas will help! We know that even after carbon emissions hopefully decrease and stop, it will take the atmosphere time to process all the carbon, and we will still be feeling the negative effects of global warming about 30 years before the climate starts returning to "normal" (see the book "Under the Sky We Make" by Canadian climate scientist and optimist, Kim Nicholls) - I don't know if most people know that, know the level of suffering and chaos that is coming our way in most parts of the world unless our cities become extraordinarily proactive in preparing!

It keeps me awake often and breaks my heart for the 2SLGBTQIA community because historical analysis shows that in times of pressure and tension, violence and hatred toward us increases, as we are a minority group often scapegoated. For me, queerness and climate justice are completely connected and I think lots of people here agree!

Other thoughts:

- Is there a way to ban leaf blowers? They're so noisy. Yards don't need to be spotless. Or can we encourage electric ones which are quieter? My friend's condo

downtown has a gas-powered leaf blower going around it at least twice a week for hours. I was dog sitting there and I felt like it was noise torture!

- Cemeteries. What's the deal here. Are they permanent? Did we think this through? What is our plan now? How can we reclaim that land? Can we? Can we make sure we don't create new ones going forward?

ACTIVITY 2 – Rank Council's 8 Priorities

1. Housing (9 dots)
2. Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment (8 dots)
3. Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (4 dots)
Community Well-Being and Safety (4 dots)
Truth and Reconciliation (4 dots)

Followed by:

- Transportation (3 dots)
- Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces (2 dots)
- Economic Health and Community Vitality (2 dots)



Budget Community Conversation #8: City of Victoria Youth Council

Wednesday, August 28, 2024, 6-8:30 p.m.

Victoria City Hall, 1 Centennial Square

11 participants

Co-Host: Anisha Lapour, Mental Health Program and Youth Coordinator, Volunteer Victoria

ACTIVITY 1 – Share Your Ideas

The following notes depict the agreed-upon themes, the content of each sticky note and the associated comments captured during the community conversation, when applicable.

Arts and Culture

- More City grants for arts + culture projects

Comments:

- More grants for arts and culture projects

Climate

Comments:

- More green roofing
- Create incentives for more environmentally-centred building
- Look at green handing roof examples from around the world

Community

Comments:

- There are better ways to spend money than on Centennial Square renovations

Economy

Comments:

- Victoria 3.0 Economic Action Plan – what is it? (need to communicate it more)

Education/Information

- Public bulletin boards
- Ask your people how to get info
- Politics “How to Class” as part of career life education in high school
- Life skills (taxes, budgeting)
- Public Wifi options (like Shaw Open but not Shaw)

Comments:

- City could be the hub of all information
- Bulletin boards (need to make information more accessible to youth)

- Devices for youth are for entertainment – need to give them print
- Youth use social media for fun, not for finding information
- Post information in schools (posters); print brochures
- Survey youth to find out how to reach them
- City to invest in hiring ambassadors in each age group to be at schools and share information with peers
- Youth canvassing others and being champions of information on programs
- Better wifi (3G) ... (check post-it note)
- Politics should be a mandatory course in all levels of schools (elementary, middle and high schools) – part of
- Mental health education in schools (teach people how their brains work)
- How to courses: how to do your taxes, do budgets (high school foundations math is more life skills vs calculus math more academic)

Development

- Reduce development project on existing green spaces

Comments:

- Centennial Square Improvement Plan - Why does all that money need to be invested there
Can't it be shared elsewhere?
- Re-purposing a community space – provide more time for transition out of a space
- Due to renovations, people have been displaced – where have they gone?

Health (Physical and Mental)

- Mental health care
- Shortening the waitlist for treatment on substance use disorder
- Detox centres and options on island
- Social and economic supports for peer support workers
- Host a workshop for youth about mental health; mental health education in schools
- More clinics and places people can get help – physical and mental
- Public wellness/activity programs
- Better access to medical care
- Better dental

Comments:

- More mental health services – better access for substance use disorder in youth especially (Foundry, detox and transition out of, more free counselling for youth)
- Ignoring people with mental health struggles impacts everyone in society
- More funding for more detox options
- People need better transition plans after detox
- Shorter waiting lists for substances use disorder for youth especially

- Expand services for youth with substance use disorder
- Peer support workers need more support and better wages (Does the City fund the Foundry?)
- More clinics and where people can get physical and mental health care
- Offer/fund workshops for youth on mental health – what a healthy mind looks like and how to navigate the mental health system to access care
- Let youth know where to get help

Housing

- Affordable housing
- Affordable housing especially for post-secondary students
- More co-op housing
- Low-barrier housing and “clean” + “unclean” housing
- Grants/housing subsidies for youth/young folk/first-time housing
- Survey people looking for housing and build to that demographic
- How are affordable units distributed to people in need?
- Information campaign about housing grants and accessibility

Comments:

- Housing for people suffering from homelessness and addiction; more mental health group homes
- Housing is a human right
- More co-op housing
- Need affordable housing, especially for post-secondary students
- Tiny homes – more of them
- What is affordable housing? Affordable housing... affordable to who?
- How is it determined which units are affordable?
- Need more university housing for students
- Young people need to be able to see a home in their future
- Grant subsidies for young people for housing (young people don't see owning a home of any kind in their future)
- COVID negatively impacted housing – families use it but didn't open them to students (less turnover)
- Landlords will give the worst apartments to students (What could the City do to help with improving this situation)?
- We need a Housing First program (other cities have done it)
- We need a maximum rent set by government
- How is the City ensuring “affordable housing” stays affordable when tenants move out and new ones move in?
- Need more low-barrier housing for people (private space for people to rebuild their lives) with supports

- Shelters being operated by Our Place and Cool Aid, are they operated by non-profits and funded by the BC Government/BC Housing?
- Why are shelters operated by non-profits?
- Affordable apartments – how is this being done? And how do you give it to people who would benefit the most from it
- City could promote information for first-time buyers to youth, adults and vulnerable (go to schools)
- We need to consider those who use public space to shelter without lessening the number of spaces available
- Better homestay experience for international students (they are giving them expired food and treat them poorly) Can the City get involved more to do something?
- Need investment in different types of housing
- IDEA: Could there be a survey of people who are looking for housing – and then develop housing that fits those needs. A survey to find out who needs housing the most and what's affordable and what they want it to look like. Act according to this data.

Parks

- More community gardens
- Park restoration – safer public areas
- More green roofing around the city. Both incentive programs and public spaces
- Centennial Square reno – better use of \$ - some unhouse use as a hub

Comments:

- Enhancements/upgrades, safety, lighting, passive and recreational areas
- More green roofing in public spaces (green roofing is key to building a sustainable city in the future and creating an environmentally-friendly city) – aesthetic and ghg reductions – can be added after – hanging triangle squares between buildings that provide shade areas and makes the air fresher; check out this [presentation](#) that was made to the Valladolid (Spain) City Council on green roofs, canopies and green shady structures
- More trees
- Reduced development in green spaces

Reconciliation

- A space to learn about Indigenous culture + history from their perspective

Recreation

- More youth-friendly events (not for kids/youth just friendly)
- Youth centres to hang out (more place)
- Events that are inclusive to youth (not just 19+)
- Shopping malls

Comments:

- More places for youth to hang out downtown
- Youth centre downtown with programming (a youth hub) with relaxed hang-out
- Public wellness and activity programs
- Shopping malls – need to be improved in terms of the types of stores – industrialized more – comparing China with Victoria's – improve the experience for youth

Safety

- No street sweeps
- Safe supply
- Increasing accessibility of naloxone and more naloxone training

Comments:

- No street sweeps (Stop the Sweeps campaign) – which Council priority do street sweeps fall under?
- We need a safe supply of drugs
- Safe drug consumption sites
- Safe drug sites/more housing for homeless, for people with addiction + homeless
- Centennial Square is an area that unhoused people gather to avoid Pandora
- We need to consider those who use public space to shelter without lessening the number of spaces available
- More emergency shelters
- More shelters for people in need
- Safe transportation at night in general
- Safer public areas
- More clean areas
- Safe transportation at night and in general (scary and unsafe to leave an event at 10:30 p.m. You don't want to leave that spot. Need to wait for your ride.)

Transportation

- Electric buses
- More routes more buses
- More bike routes
- More accessibility – electric buses
- Consistent/more buses and different options

Comments:

- BC Transit needs to invest in more electric buses in its fleet as well as improving more bus routes via BC Transit – can rely on buses to be on time (not wait 30 minutes). Would new bus routes have electric buses instead of regular buses?
- More electric buses to reduce carbon emissions and that are accessible
- We need buses to be reliable (on schedule and not full)
- Need more protected bike lanes

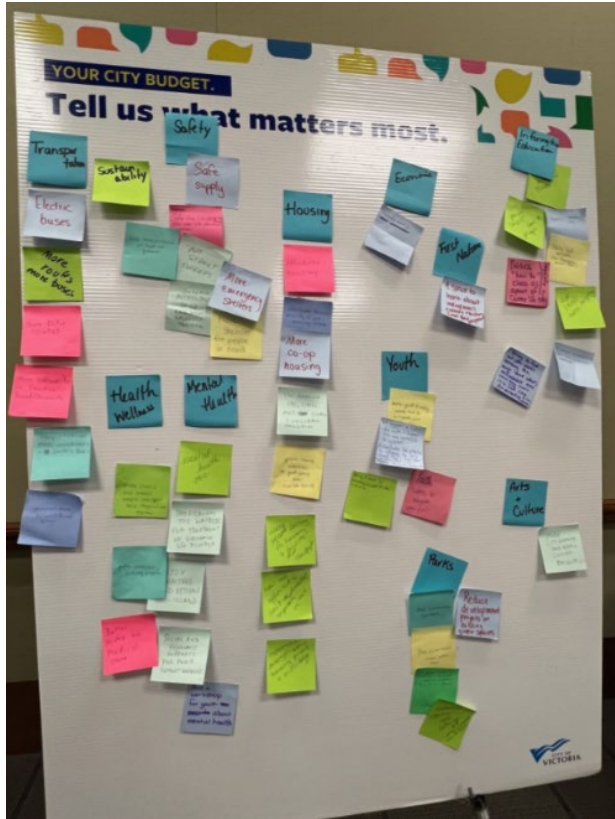
- What about hydrogen vehicles?
- Interest in percentage of budget for Transportation

Youth and Politics

- Having it easier for university students to vote in election

Comments:

- Many barriers for university students to vote
- How do you vote if you're a student in B.C. but your parents live elsewhere, such as in Ontario? You may live in Victoria, but if your parents live in Nanaimo, you can only vote in Nanaimo!
- Education on how youth can be involved in voting systems – starting early in schools about local government
- Mock elections in all levels of schools with visits from candidates
- Youth engagement in politics: mock debates in Parliament; youth access (organized) to the legislature; understanding the potential to influence the world. Margaret Mead's quote: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world."
- You can sign a declaration if you don't have two pieces of ID – need to promote how to vote (make this accessible)
- Need to make voting information more accessible
- Politics needs a rebranding
- Everyone needs to realize it's important to get involved and to vote
- Information about participatory democracy
- People don't realize they are involved in politics



ACTIVITY 2 – Rank Council’s 8 Priorities

Activity Results:

1. Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (9 dots)
2. Community Safety and Wellbeing (8 dots)
3. Housing (7 dots)

Followed by:

- Truth and Reconciliation (4 dots)
- Economic Health and Community Vitality (3 dots)
- Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment (1 dot)
- Transportation (1 dot)
- Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces (0 dots)

Council Priorities

Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship



Housing

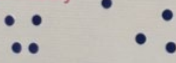


Transportation

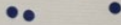


Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces

Community Well-Being and Safety



Economic Health and Community Vitality



Truth and Reconciliation



Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment



Tell us what matters most.

YOUR CITY BUDGET

